

# Morphology and Syntax (LING 4050) Syllabus

Alexander Smith (instructor)

## BASICS

Email: smith.alexander.david@gmail.com  
Office: Language building 409L (Mon 3–4, Tues 10–12)  
Room: Radio, TV, Film, and Performing Arts (RTFP), 135  
Date and Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30 – 4:50  
Website (syllabus updates) *austronesianist.com/teaching*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to the foundations of morphological and syntactic analysis, providing descriptive and analytical techniques for understanding the internal structure of words, phrases and clauses. We will use these foundations to organize linguistic data, find patterns and solve problems in typologically different morphological and syntactic systems and assess theoretical constructs in linguistics. More specifically, the course will explore in detail many structural properties that are common across different languages, even those that clearly do not share a common recent past. A simple example: all languages have specific strategies to ask questions that make them different from affirmative sentences (e.g. English uses special question words — ‘who’, ‘what’ and so on — as most languages do). In order to explain this and many other common properties of human language, a scientific hypothesis that has been explored in depth is that a large part of human knowledge of language is biologically determined, and maybe innate. We will be analyzing syntax in a formal framework, and will focus on the Principles and Parameters approach. Much of the course will deal with the evolution of Principles and Parameters over the past several decades, up to the Minimalist Program. The course should give students a solid foundation in morphology and syntax, and equip students with the knowledge necessary to begin more in-depth research. There will be a mid-term (on morphology), and a final paper and presentation (morphological and syntactic description of any language). Final papers are due on the day of the final (to be determined). Homework will consist of morphology and syntax problem sets, to be assigned throughout the semester.

## GRADING

Participation	20%
Homework	20%
Midterm	20%
Presentation	20%
Term Paper	20%
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Total	100%

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance is very important for this class. This is where we will discuss the readings and other class materials. We will introduce new ideas in the lecture and answer any questions students may have. If a student misses a class, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with what was missed by asking classmates and/or the instructor. The student's efforts in coming to class on time will be duly recognized.

## LINGUISTICS COLLOQUIA

As part of the attendance requirement, students are also required to attend the various linguistics colloquia, to be held throughout the semester. Let me know if you are unable to attend any of the colloquia. I also encourage you to attend the three scheduled *Discovery Series* talks. The first is scheduled for February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1:00 pm, Willis Library room 340.

## PARTICIPATION

To be successful in this class, students must attend class sessions with proper preparation. Assigned readings must be completed before corresponding lectures. Lectures are not simply a review of the material in the textbook; they presuppose and expand upon that material. To make the lectures more meaningful and understanding, please be prepared to share your questions and comments on assigned readings in class. Students are responsible for all of the information presented in this course, and students' active participation in class and proper preparation for class are also expected. Asking questions is very important and will affect grades. Office hours (to be determined) and email are also good ways to get credit for participation.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism and cheating. Students who violate the University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course. NOTE: It is very easy to cite a resource and acknowledge where the information you are using came from. There is no need to leave information that is taken directly from an outside source uncited, and there is no need to avoid using information from outside sources out of fear of being accused of plagiarism. If you need any help referencing and citing your information, just let me know.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC
Jan 16, 18	Introduction to each other and to morphology and syntax, (Morphology chapter 1)
Jan 23, 25	Morphology chapters 1, 2
Jan 30, Feb 1	Morphology chapters 2, 3
Feb 6, 8	Morphology chapter 4 Chapter 4 exercises due Feb 8 <sup>th</sup>
Feb 13, 15	Morphology chapter 6 Chapter 6 exercises due Feb 15 <sup>th</sup>
Feb 20, 22	Morphology chapter 7 Chapter 7 exercises due Feb 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Feb 27, Mar 1	Introduction to Generative syntax (Carnie chapter 1) I will hand out a midterm study guide on the 1 <sup>st</sup>
Mar 6, 8	Midterm Mar 6 <sup>th</sup> midterm review, Mar 8 <sup>th</sup> midterm
Mar 13, 15	Spring Break
Mar 20, 22	Carnie chapter 2 and 3 Chapter 1 and 2 Problem sets due Mar 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Mar 27, 29	Carnie chapter 4
Apr 3, 5	Carnie chapter 5
Apr 10, 12	Carnie chapter 6 and 7
Apr 17, 19	Carnie chapter 8 and 9
Apr 24, 26	Carnie chapter 10
May 1, 3	Review and presentations

## DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

## Texts

Arnoff, M. and K. Fudeman (2010). *What is Morphology?* (2 ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Carnie, A. (2012). *Syntax: a generative introduction* (4 ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.